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Page 7 of 11

14. (previously presented) The layer 2 link handler as described in claim 1, wherein processing that specifies one path of the connection request destination from layer 2 link information in said path specification means is done under software control by a processor, and the path connection means that connects said permanent virtual connection path of layer 1 connected between said network-side device and the user-side device to a path specified by said processor after said path is specified, is constituted by a switching means by means of hardware.

15. (currently amended) A layer 2 link path connection method comprising the steps of: providing a layer 2 link handler connected by a permanent virtual connection path with a user-side device;

extracting by said link handler a request connection destination name from layer 2 link information emitted from the user-side device at the time of a layer 2 link connection request;

extracting a connection destination address from said connection destination name by means of a conversion table;

notifying the user-side device connected by a permanent virtual connection path of said connection destination address;

emitting by the user-side device the connection destination address it has been notified of to the a network-side device; and

based on said connection destination address, connecting by the network-side device, the user-side device and the connection destination by switching one of permanent virtual connection paths and switched virtual connection paths.

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